

Alcohol Safety Action Program

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► Agency Mission

To reduce the incidence of driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) and substance abuse in Fairfax County through alcohol/drug education, case management, public education, and referral to alcohol/drug treatment programs when necessary; to provide the Circuit, General District and Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts probationary and supervisory services and to ensure public safety.

► Trends/Issues

Overview

The Alcohol Safety Action Program (ASAP) has served an average of 3,468 clients annually over the past three years. This number has steadily increased over the past decade, with no increase in SYEs. In FY 1989 when ASAP was moved from the Community Services Board to the Department of Human Services, staff was decreased from 25 to 15 regular employees, and became user-funded. The program was placed in the Department of Human Services as a result of a State ruling that required that no ASAP program be administered through Community Services Boards.

ASAP has instituted additional user-funded programs to meet court and community needs and increase revenues since that time. These programs include a drug education program for substance abusers; an innovative program for substance-abusing teenagers referred by the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court (S.A.F.E.); driver improvement programs in both English and Spanish; and an innovative pilot program for educating reckless/aggressive drivers.

Increased Workload

The duties required of ASAP have increased in the last five years through legislative action. Offenders convicted of a DUI 2nd must now participate in ASAP, and ASAP supervision is required for three years. This is in contrast to the one-year probationary service mandated for all DUI 1st offenders. That change has resulted in the ASAP supervising a clientele that is generally further along in the addictive process and requires increased attention. Another law passed in FY 2000 requires all DUI 2nd offenders to install ignition interlock devices in their vehicles and that process must be supervised by ASAP.

The significant increase of offenders in the last three years who speak only Spanish has resulted in an increased workload for ASAP staff as well. These clients require more time during the intake process, increased attention from probation and administrative staff, more effort in locating treatment services, and the translation of all forms and letters.

The result of these expanded duties is that staff are carrying extremely high caseloads, with greater needs, and are finding it difficult to meet basic program requirements and ensure the public safety.

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Fees Assessed

ASAP charges a fee of \$350 for its core program, a total that has not changed since FY 1994 and is expected to remain at that rate in FY 2002. Since FY 1987, a State-mandated fee of up to \$300 has been charged for impaired driving cases (DUI). In FY 1994, the State allowed an additional \$50 fee to be charged each offender for intervention services (education), resulting in the current \$350 total.

In efforts to keep pace with rising personnel costs, ASAP raised the discretionary fees for its S.A.F.E. program for teens from \$125 to \$175 in FY 2001. In addition, the fee for the Driver Improvement Program is set at \$60, comparable to other programs in the area, and the fee for the Reckless/Aggressive Education Program is set at \$125. As ASAP's personnel costs are higher than other ASAP program throughout the State, Fairfax ASAP requested and received permission from the State to charge \$200 for Habitual Offender Evaluations, a fee capped by the State for other programs at \$150.

In order to improve the program collection rate, ASAP will continue procedures in FY 2002 that will revoke the operator's license of any DUI client who has not successfully completed the ASAP program, which includes paying the full ASAP probationary fee. In addition, ASAP is now required through State legislation to verify in the DMV's computer system successful completion of ASAP, including payment of the fee; failure to complete the program will result in the revocation of driving privileges. Both processes will result in increased collections in future years.

In short, the major issue for ASAP is the trend toward higher personnel costs and the static State-mandated \$350 service fee. In the last two years, despite the development of additional sources of revenue through ancillary services and increased efforts to maximize revenue collection, expenditures have exceeded revenues. Since FY 1989, the agency has consistently maintained a fund balance sufficient to support the program; however, the fund balance is now at a precariously low level, and projections are that sufficient funds may not be available to cover program requirements in FY 2002. Some potential remedies are set forth in the "FY 2002 Initiatives" section which follows:

Key Accomplishments

- The successful completion of 92 percent of DUI offenders referred to the program annually.
- The institution of innovative and needed services for the Courts and community.
- Management of the organization since 1989 in a way that ensured user-funded status.
- The generation of revenue for the County through the institution of processes that ensure the payment of all court costs prior to licensure for habitual offenders, and the payment of all ASAP fees for DUI offenders.

Key Challenges

- Hiring and retaining professional staff that are bilingual.
- Acquisition of hardware, and staff training to meet ASAP requirements for entering information into the DMV database regarding enrollment and successful completion of ASAP, as well as ignition interlock compliance.
- Availability of affordable bilingual treatment services for Hispanic and Korean offenders.

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FY 2002 Initiatives

- Increase advertisement and marketing of the ASAP Driver Improvement Program and the Reckless/Aggressive Driver Education Program.
- Orient all staff to the newly installed Outlook program made available to them on two communal computers.
- Orient all staff to the newly acquired access to the Court's CMS system, allowing tracking of criminal and civil cases.
- In light of increased personnel costs and workload, work with County officials to facilitate a Northern Virginia initiative with the State to acquire funding assistance through a Northern Virginia "differential." Currently, all local ASAPs are required to return 8 percent of their fee revenues to the State. This proposal seeks to reduce the share that Northern Virginia ASAPs return to the State due to the higher costs of doing business in this part of the State.
- Discuss with the ASAP Policy Board and County officials all other available options to address and resolve the issue of the static state-mandated fee structure which no longer supports the cost of the local program.

► Summary of All Agency CAPS

CAPS Number	CAPS Title	CAPS Net Cost	CAPS Number of Positions/SYE
117-01	Alcohol Safety Action Program	\$57,022	15/15
TOTAL Agency		\$57,022	15/15